

Draft of Chapter VI, "A Knock at Midnight"

Author: King, Martin Luther, Jr.

Date: July 1, 1962 to March 31, 1963 (?)

Location: Atlanta, Ga. (?)

<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/draft-chapter-vi-knock-midnight>

In this sermon, delivered as early as 1958, King speaks candidly about the church's inability to meet the challenges of modern life and the needs of those seeking religious solace.¹ He charges, "How often has the church left men disappointed at midnight, while it slept quietly in a chamber of pious irrelevancy." In particular, King criticizes the black church for being either one that "reduces worship to entertainment" or that offers "a loaf of stale bread that has been hardened by the winter of morbid class consciousness." King, nonetheless, remains hopeful about the church's potential to serve the needy, saying, "We must provide them with the fresh bread of hope, and imbue them with the conviction that God is still working with this old sinful world, and he has the power to [wring] the good out of the evil."



"Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him."

(Luke 11:5, 6)

Although this is a parable dealing with the power of persistent prayer, there is much in it that can serve as a basis for analyzing many of the problems of the modern world and the role of the church in grappling with them. The first thing we notice in the parable is that it is midnight. It is also midnight in the world today. The darkness is so deep that we hardly see which way to turn.²

It is midnight in the social order. As we look out on the international horizon we see the nations of the world engaged in a colossal and bitter contest for supremacy. Within a generation two world wars have been fought, and the clouds of another war are constantly hovering dangerously low. Man now has within his possession atomic and nuclear weapons that can completely destroy any of the major cities of the world in a matter of seconds. In spite of this, the arms race continues at breakneck speed. Nuclear tests continue to explode in the atmosphere with the grim prospect that the very air we breathe will be poisoned by radioactive fallout. Bigger and faster missiles continue to carve highways of death through the stratosphere. There is the ever present danger that all of these conditions and weapons will yet conspire to bring about the total annihilation of the human race.

In the past when we have confronted midnight in the social order we have turned to science for help. And little wonder! Science has saved us on so many occasions. When we were in the midnight of physical limitations and material inconvenience it was science that lifted us to the bright morning of physical and material comfort. When we were in the midnight of crippling ignorance and superstition, it was science that brought us to the daybreak of objective appraisal and creative analysis.³ When we were caught in the midnight of dread plagues and diseases, it was science, through surgery, sanitation and the wonder drugs, that lifted us to the bright day of physical health, thereby prolonging our lives and making for greater security and physical well being. So it is quite easy to understand why men turn to science when the problems of the world are so ghastly in detail and ominous in extent.⁴

But alas! Science cannot rescue us this time, because the scientist themselves are caught in the terrible midnight of our age. Indeed it was science that gave us the very instruments that can lead today to universal suicide. So modern man continues to face a dreary and frightening midnight in the social order.

This midnight in man's external collective life has brought about midnight in his internal individual life. It is midnight in the psychological order. Everywhere there are people who are harrowed by day and haunted by night

with paralyzing fears. Deep clouds of anxiety and depression are floating in so many of our mental skies. Indeed people are more emotionally disturbed today than at any other period of human history. The psychopathic wards of our hospitals are more crowded than ever before. The most popular psychologists today are the psychoanalysts. The best sellers in psychology are books like *Man Against Himself*, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Times*, and *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. The best sellers in religion are such books as *Peace of Mind* and *Peace of Soul*.⁵ The most popular preachers are those who can preach soothing sermons on “How To Be Happy” and “How To Relax.” Some have been tempted to re-translate Jesus' command to read “Go ye into all the world and keep your blood pressure down and lo I will make you a well-adjusted personality.”⁶ All of this is indicative of the fact that it is midnight in the inner lives of men and women.

It is also midnight in the moral order. Midnight is a time when all colors lose their distinctiveness and become merely a dirty shade of gray.⁷ In so many instances moral principles have lost their distinctiveness. Nothing is absolutely right or absolutely wrong for modern man; it is just a matter of what the majority of people are doing. For most people right and wrong are merely relative to their likes and dislikes and the customs of their particular community. We have unconsciously taken Einstein's theory of relativity, which properly described the physical universe, and applied it to the moral and ethical realm.

Midnight is a time when everybody is desperately seeking to avoid getting caught. It is the hour when hardly anybody is concerned about obeying the ten commandments; everybody is passionately seeking to obey the eleventh commandment—“thou shall not get caught.” According to the ethic of midnight the only sin is to get caught and the only virtue is to get by. It's all right to lie, but do it with real finesse; it's all right to steal, but be a dignified stealer, so that if you are caught it becomes embezzlement rather than robbery; it's all right even to hate, but dress your hate up in the garments of love and make it appear that you are loving when you are actually hating.⁸ So in place of the Darwinian survival of the fittest, many have substituted a philosophy of the survival of the slickest. This has led to a tragic breakdown of moral standards. And so the midnight of moral degeneration grows deeper and deeper.

But, as in the parable, so in our world today, the deep darkness of the midnight is interrupted by the sound of a knock. It is the door of the Church on which millions of people are knocking.⁹ In this country church rolls are larger than ever before. More than 100,000,000 people are at least paper members of some church or Synagogue. Compare this with the fact that in 1929 there were only 50,000,000 church members. This represents an increase of 100 percent, while the population only increased 31 percent during the same period. Recent visitors to Soviet Russia, a country whose official policy is atheistic, have reported that the churches of that nation are not only bulging over with people Sunday after Sunday, but that they are growing every day. Harrison Salisbury, in a recent article in the New York Times on religious life in Russia, stated that the officials of the Communist party are becoming disturbed over the fact that so many young people are expressing a growing interest in the church and religion.¹⁰ After forty years of the most vigorous efforts to suppress religion, the hierarchy of the Communist party is now faced with the inescapable fact that millions of people are knocking on the door of the church.

Now this numerical growth of the Church is not to be over-emphasized. We must not succumb to the temptation of confusing spiritual power with big numbers. Jumboism, as someone has called it, is an utterly fallacious standard in measuring positive power.¹¹ An increase in quantity does not necessarily represent an increase in quality. A bigger membership does not necessarily represent a bigger commitment to Christ. It has almost always been the creative, dedicated minority that has made the world better. But in spite of the fact that the numerical growth of the church does not necessarily represent a concomitant growth in ethical commitment, it does mean that millions of people feel that the Church can provide an answer to the deep confusion that has encompassed their lives. It is still the one familiar landmark to which the weary traveller by midnight comes. It is the one house which stands where it has always stood, the house to which the man travelling at midnight either comes or refuses to come. Some decide not to come.¹² But the many who come and knock are desperately seeking a little bread to tide them over.

Like the man in the parable, they are asking for three loaves of bread. They want the bread of faith. Living through a generation of so many colossal disappointments, with one towering frustration piled on another, so many men have lost faith in God, faith in man, and faith in the future. Many feel somewhat like Wilberforce felt in 1801 when he said: “I dare not marry—the future is so unsettled;” or as William Pitt felt in 1806 when he said: “There is scarcely

anything round us but ruin and despair.”¹³ In the midst of this staggering disillusionment, many are crying out for the bread of faith.

There is also a deep longing for the bread of hope. Many who lived in the early days of this century did not feel the need of seeking this bread. Living in the days of the first telephones, the first automobiles, and the first airplanes caused them to grow up with a radiant optimism. They worshiped at the shrine of Herbert Spencer's doctrine of inevitable progress.¹⁴ They believed that every new scientific achievement was lifting man to higher levels of perfection. But then came a series of tragic developments which revealed the selfishness and corruption of man, and pointed out with frightening clarity the truth of Lord Acton's dictum: “Power tends to corrupt. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.”¹⁵ This awful discovery led to one of the most colossal breakdowns of optimism in history. For so many people, young and old, the light of hope has gone out, and they roam wearily in the dark chambers of pessimism. Many have concluded that life has no meaning. There are those who would agree with the philosopher [Arthur] Schopenhauer in saying: “Life is an endless pain with a painful end;” or as he said on another occasion: “Life is a tragic-comedy played over and over again with only slight changes in costume and scenery.”¹⁶ Others would cry out with Shakespeare's Macbeth:

Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound
and fury, signifying nothing.¹⁷

But in spite of the inevitable moments when all seems hopeless, men know that without some sense of hope they are really dead while they live. So in agonizing desperation they are crying for the bread of hope.

Then there is the deep longing for the bread of love. Everybody wants to love and be loved. He who feels that he isn't loved feels that he is nobody, that he doesn't count. So much has happened in the modern world to make men feel that they don't belong. Caught in the chains of injustice and the manacles of discrimination, many of us are left feeling that we are things rather than persons. Living in big cities, and mass populations, many of us are driven to believe that we are merely depersonalized cogs in a vast industrial wheel. Living in a world which has become so oppressively impersonal, many of us have come to feel that we are little more than a number. Ralph Borsodi has given an arresting picture of a world where numbers have replaced persons. He writes that today the modern mother is often merely maternity case No. 8434, and her child, after being fingerprinted and footprinted, becomes No. 8003. At the other end of life a modern funeral in a large city becomes an event in Parlor B on a certain day, with Preacher No. 14, singer No. 87, rendering music. No. 174, flowers and decorations Class B. Frustrated because of this growing tendency to reduce man to a card in a vast index, modern man is in a desperate search for the bread of love.

When the man in the parable knocked on the door of his friend and asked for the three loaves of bread, he received the impatient retort: “Don't bother me! The door is fastened, and my children and I have gone to bed; I cannot get up and give you any.” In other words, this man was left disappointed at midnight. How often have men experienced a similar disappointment when they knocked on the door of the Church at midnight. How often has the church left men disappointed at midnight, while it slept quietly in a chamber of pious irrelevancy. Millions of Africans have patiently knocked on the door of the Christian church seeking the bread of social justice. In almost every instance they have either been ignored altogether, or told to wait later—later almost always meaning never. In America millions of Negroes starving for the want of the bread of freedom have knocked over and over again on the door of the so-called white churches. They have usually confronted a cold indifference and a blatant hypocrisy. Even the white religious leaders who have a heartfelt desire to open the door and provide the bread are often more cautious than courageous and more prone to follow the expedient path than the ethical path. It is one of the shameful tragedies of history that the institution which should be removing man from the midnight of racial segregation is itself a participant in creating and perpetuating the midnight.

Men caught in the terrible midnight of war have often knocked on the door of the Church to find the bread of peace. In almost every instance the church has left them disappointed. Hardly anything has revealed the pathetic irrelevancy of the church in present-day world affairs as its stand on war. In the midst of a world gone mad with

arms buildups, {chauvinistic} passions, and imperialistic exploitation, the church has stood by, either endorsing these activities or remaining appallingly silent. During the last two world wars the national churches often functioned as the ready lackeys of the state. They sprinkled holy water upon the battleships and joined the mighty armies in singing “praise the Lord and pass the ammunition.”¹⁸ A weary world pleading desperately for peace has often found the church giving moral sanction to war.

Then there are those who have gone to the church for the bread of economic justice. How often has the church left men standing in the frustrating midnight of economic deprivation. In so many instances it has so aligned itself with the privileged classes and defended the status quo that it found it impossible to answer the knock at midnight. We must never forget the lesson of the Greek Church in Russia. This church allied itself with the status quo and became so inextricably bound with the despotic czarist regime, that it was impossible to get rid of the corrupt political and social system without getting rid of the church. This is the fate of every ecclesiastical organization that allies itself with the status-quo.¹⁹

The church must be reminded once again that {it} is not to be the master or the servant of the state, but the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state,—never its tool. As long as the church is a tool of the state it will be unable to provide even a modicum of bread for men at midnight. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal and cease to be an echo of the status-quo it will be relegated to an irrelevant social club with no moral or spiritual authority. If the church does not participate actively in the struggle for peace, economic and racial justice, it will forfeit the loyalty of millions and cause men everywhere to know that it is an institution whose will is atrophied. But if the church will free itself from the shackles of a deadening status-quo, and, recovering its great historic mission, will proceed to speak and act fearlessly and insistently on the questions of justice and peace, it will enkindle the imagination of mankind. It will fire the souls of men and imbue them with a glowing and ardent love for truth, justice and peace. Men far and near will then see the church as that great fellowship of love which provides light and bread for lonely travellers at midnight.

In speaking of the laxity of the church, I must not overlook the fact that the so-called Negro church has often left men disappointed at midnight. I say so-called Negro church, because ideally, there can be no Negro or white church. It is to the everlasting shame of the American church that white Christians developed a system of racial segregation within the church, and inflicted so many indignities upon its Negro worshippers that they had to go out and organize their own churches. There are two types of Negro churches that have failed to provide bread at midnight. One is a church that burns up with emotionalism and the other is a church that freezes up with classism. The former is a church that reduces worship to entertainment, and places more emphasis on volume than on content. It confuses spirituality with muscleality. The danger of this church is that its members will end up with more religion in their hands and feet than in their hearts and souls. So many people have gone by this type of church at midnight, and it had neither the vitality nor the relevant gospel to feed their hungry souls. The other type of Negro church that leaves men unfed at midnight is a church that develops a class system within. It boasts of the fact that it is a dignified church, and most of its members are professional people. It takes pride in its exclusiveness. In this church the worship service is cold and meaningless. The music is dull and uninspiring. The sermon is little more than a nice little essay on current events. If the pastor says too much about Jesus Christ the members begin to feel that he is taking the dignity out of the pulpit. If the choir sings a Negro spiritual, the members bow their head in shame feeling that this is an affront to their class status.²⁰ The tragedy of this type of church is that it fails to see that worship at its best is a social experience with people of all levels of life coming together to realize their oneness and unity under God. This church ends up losing the spiritual force of the “whosoever will let him come” doctrine, and is little more than a social club with a thin veneer of religiosity.²¹ When men have gone by this church at midnight they have either been ignored altogether because of their limited education or they have been given a loaf of stale bread that has been hardened by the winter of morbid class consciousness.

As we turn to the parable again we notice that in spite of the man's initial disappointment he continued to knock on the door of his Friend. This is so true of men's experience with the church. How bitterly men and women speak about their disappointment with the church. But in spite of being left disappointed, many continue to knock. In the parable the man continued to knock so patiently and diligently that the man within finally opened the door and gave him bread. Because of his importunity—his persistence, his urgent plea—he was able to persuade his Friend to

open the door. It is very doubtful that the man in need of bread would have continued to knock on the friend's door if he had had the slightest notion that there was no bread in his house. He would have left immediately after the Friend impatiently told him to leave. But even though he was at first disappointed he continued to knock because he knew that some bread was in that house. Many men continue to knock on the door of the church at midnight, even though the church has so bitterly disappointed them, because they know deep down within that the bread of life is there.

The greatest challenge facing the church today is to keep the bread fresh and remain a Friend to men at midnight. The church must proclaim God's son as the hope of the world. Jesus Christ is the hope of men in all of their complex personal and social problems.²² Many will continue to come by the church in quest for an answer to life's problems. Many young people will knock on the door who are perplexed by the uncertainties of life, confused by the disappointments of life and disillusioned by the ambiguities of history. Some will come who were torn from their schools and careers during the war and thrown into dirty, filthy trenches. Some will come who have been crippled, gassed, or blinded in the dark horrors of war. They will wander here in the midnight of gloom and hopelessness. We must provide them with the fresh bread of hope, and imbue them with the conviction that God is still working with this old sinful world, and he has the power to ring the good out of the evil. Some will come tortured with a nagging sense of guilt as a result of their wandering in the midnight of ethical relativism and commitment to the doctrine of self-expression. We must lead them to Christ where they can find the fresh bread of forgiveness. Some will knock who are moving toward the evening of life and are tormented with the fear of death. We must provide them with the bread of faith in immortality, so that they will realize that this earthly life is merely an embryonic prelude to a new awakening and that death is not a period which ends this great sentence of life, but a comma that punctuates it to more loftier significance.

Midnight is a confusing hour, and one in which it is difficult to be faithful; but the relevancy and power of the church will be measured by its capacity to meet the needs of those who come at midnight. The most inspiring word that the church can say to men at midnight is that no midnight is here to stay. The weary traveller by midnight who is asking for bread is really asking for the dawn.²³ Our eternal message of hope is that dawn will come. Midnight is only a temporary development in the cycle of life's day. Our slave foreparents realized this. They were never unmindful of the fact of midnight, for there was always the rawhide whip of the overseer and the auction block where families were torn asunder to remind them of its reality. So when they thought of midnight with all of its agonizing darkness they sang:

Oh, Nobody knows de trouble I've seen;
Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down
Oh, yes, Lord,
Sometimes, I'm almost to de groun',
Oh, yes, Lord.
Oh, nobody knows de trouble I've seen,
Glory Hallelujah.²⁴

But even though encompassed by a staggering midnight, they had faith to believe that morning would come. When thinking of this they would sing:

I'm so glad trouble don't last alway.
O my Lord, Oh my Lord, what shall I do?²⁵

Here we see a positive belief in the dawn which uses the midnight of life as the raw material out of which it creates its own strength. This was the growing edge of hope that kept the slaves going amid the most barren and tragic circumstances.²⁶

In the final analysis, faith in the dawn grows out of faith in God. It grows out of the conviction that God is good and God is just. When one believes this he knows that the contradictions of life are neither final nor ultimate. Therefore, he can walk through the dark night with a sense of being safe and being secure. He lives radiant

conviction that all things work together for good for those that love God. He knows that even the most starless midnight may be the darkest moment just before the dawn of some great fulfillment.

I recall a very meaningful experience during the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. At the beginning of the boycott we were able to set up a voluntary carpool to assist in getting the people to and from their jobs. After we had struggled for eleven long months and our carpool had worked extraordinarily well, Mayor [William] Gayle introduced a resolution instructing the city's legal department to "file such proceedings as it may deem proper to stop the operation of car pool or transportation system growing out of the bus boycott." The hearing was set for Tuesday, November 13.

Our regular weekly mass meeting was scheduled the night before the hearing. I had the responsibility of going before the mass meeting to warn the people that the car pool would probably be enjoined. I knew that they had willingly suffered for nearly twelve months, but how could they function at all with the car pool destroyed? Could we ask them to walk back and forth every day to their jobs? And if not, would we then be forced to admit that the protest had failed in the end? For the first time I almost shrank from appearing before them.

The evening came, and I mustered up enough courage to tell them the truth. I tried, however, to end on a note of hope. "We have moved all of these months," I said, "with the daring faith that God was with us in our struggle. The many experiences of days gone by have vindicated that faith in a marvelous way. We must go out with the same faith tonight. We must believe that a way will be made out of no way." But in spite of these words, I could feel the cold breeze of pessimism passing through the audience. It was a dark night—darker than a thousand midnights. It was a night in which the light of hope was about to fade away and the lamp of faith about to flicker.

Tuesday morning found us in court before Judge [Eugene] Carter. The city argued that we were operating a "private enterprise" without a franchise. Our lawyers argued brilliantly that the carpool was a voluntary "share-a-ride" plan provided as a service by Negro churches without a profit. As the hearing proceeded it was obvious that Judge Carter was going to rule in favor of the city.

As chief defendant I sat at the front table with the lawyers. Around twelve o'clock—during a brief recess—I noticed unusual commotion in the courtroom. Mayor Gayle was called to the back room. Several reporters moved excitedly in and out of the room.

Instantly a reporter came up to me with a paper in his hand.

"Here is the decision that you have been waiting for, read this release."

Quickly, with a mixture of anxiety and hope, I read these words: "The United State Supreme Court today unanimously ruled bus segregation unconstitutional in Montgomery, Alabama."²⁷ At this moment my heart began to throb with an inexpressible joy. The darkest hour of our struggle had indeed proved to be hour of victory. Someone shouted from the back of the courtroom: "God Almighty has spoken from Washington."²⁸

The night before we were in a confusing midnight, but now daybreak had come.

Yes, the dawn will come. Disappointment, sorrow and despair are all born in midnight, but we may be consoled by the fact that morning will come. "Weeping may tarry for a night," says the Psalmist, "but joy cometh in the morning."²⁹ This is the faith that will adjourn the assemblies of hopelessness, and bring new light into the dark chambers of pessimism.



Footnotes

1. King, "A Knock at Midnight," 14 September 1958, pp. 348-350 in this volume.
 2. D. T. Niles, "Evangelism," 16 August 1954: "It is midnight in the parable. It is also midnight in the world today. The night is so deep that everything has become just an object to be avoided, and obstacle in the dark against which men must take care not to bump."
 3. The phrase "objective appraisal and creative analysis" was replaced by "the free and open mind" in the published version of this sermon (King, *Strength to Love*, p. 43).
 4. In the published version: "How naturally we turn to science in a day when the problems of the world are so ghastly and ominous" (p. 43).
 5. King cites Karl A. Menninger, *Man Against Himself*; Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*; C. G. Jung, *Modern Man In Search of a Soul*; Joshua Loth Liebman, *Peace of Mind*; and Fulton J. Sheen, *Peace of Soul*.
 6. King parodies Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Halford Luccock, "Life's Saving Tension," in *Marching Off the Map* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 75: "They are almost on the verge of rewriting the Scriptures to read, 'If any man will come after me, let him relax,' or 'Go into all the world and keep down your blood pressure.'"
 7. Niles, "Evangelism": "Besides, at midnight, every colour loses its distinctiveness and becomes merely a dirty shade of grey."
 8. In the published version: "It is all right to steal, if one is so dignified that, if caught, the charge becomes embezzlement, not robbery. It is permissible even to hate, if one so dresses his hating in the garments of love that hating appears to be loving" (p. 44).
 9. Niles, "Evangelism": "But, as in the parable, so in our day, the tense silence of the midnight is disturbed by the sound of a knock. It is the door of the Church on which somebody is knocking."
 10. King may refer to the fifth in a series of articles by Salisbury: "Khrushchev's Russia—5: Anti-Semitism and Religious Upsurge Are Said to Baffle the Soviet Regime," *New York Times*, 12 September 1959.
 11. Fosdick, *The Hope of the World*, p. 4: "Again, this truth of Jesus is deflected from many modern minds because of our worship of bigness. One of my friends calls it 'Jumboism.'"
 12. Niles, "Evangelism": "That is still the one familiar landmark to which the traveller by midnight comes. . . It is the one house which stands where it has always stood, the house to which the man travelling at midnight either comes or refuses to come. Many decide not to come."
 13. William Wilberforce (1759-1833) was a British politician who worked for the abolition of slavery. William Pitt, the Younger (1759-1806), British prime minister from 1783 to 1801 and again from 1804 to 1806, opposed the slave trade.
 14. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was an English philosopher who advocated the application of progressive evolutionary theory to all branches of knowledge.
 15. John E. E. Dalberg-Acton, "Acton-Creighton Correspondence," in *Essays on Freedom and Power* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1948), p. 364.
 16. King refers to Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, vol. 3, p. 462: "In the whole of human existence suffering expresses itself clearly enough as its true destiny. Life is deeply sunk in suffering, and cannot escape from it; our entrance into it takes place amid tears, its course is at bottom always tragic, and its end still more so." King also paraphrases segments of Schopenhauer's chapter "On History" in *The World as Will and Idea*, vol. 3, pp. 224-227.
 17. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act 5, sc. 5.
 18. King refers to Frank Loesser's 1943 song "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition."
 19. Peter the Great (1682-1725) partially incorporated the Russian Orthodox Church into the government's administrative structure by replacing the independent Patriarchate of Moscow, the body of church fathers, with the Holy Synod, a collective body subordinate to the tsar. The Church remained a functionary of the tsar until the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) when the new Soviet state abolished the state religion and suppressed religious education.
 20. In the published version the phrase "bow their head in shame feeling that this is" was replaced with the word "claim" (p. 48).
 21. Cf. Mark 8:34.
 22. The preceding three sentences were condensed in the published version: "The church today is challenged to proclaim God's Son, Jesus Christ, to be the hope of men in all of their complex personal and social problems" (p. 48).
 23. Niles, "Evangelism": "Midnight is a difficult hour in which to be faithful or successful: but we shall find grace as we seek to minister to the real need of him who comes to us in the midnight. For the traveller by midnight who is asking for bread is really asking for the dawn."
 24. King quotes a verse from the spiritual "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Had."
 25. King refers to the spiritual "I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always."
 26. The preceding two sentences were condensed in the published version: "Their positive belief in the dawn was the growing edge of hope that kept the slaves faithful amid the most barren and tragic circumstances" (p. 49).
 27. On 13 November 1956, the United States Supreme Court ruled, in the case of *Gayle et al., Members of the Board of Commissioners of Montgomery, Ala., et al. v. Browder, et al.* 352 U.S. 203; 77 (1956) that the segregation of Montgomery buses was unconstitutional.
 28. King recounts this story in his book *Stride Toward Freedom*, pp. 158-160.
 29. Cf. Psalm 30:5.
- Source: MLKP, MBU, Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers, 1954-1968, Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University, Boston, Mass.